(c) whether Government of Madhya Pradesh and other representing trade and farmers have proposed increase in import duty on soya-oil and other edible oils, if so, the details thereof and Government's decision thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) No Sir. There has been no reduction in the import duty on soya-oil this hear.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Representations have been received from government of Madhya Pradesh and the trade for increasing the import duty on edible oils including soya-oil. The present import policy ensures availability of edible oils at reasonable prices to the consumers and facilitates actual users namely, manufactures of refined edible oils and vanaspati, to access raw material at a lower rate of duty. It also discourages indiscriminate imports. The present import policy is in the interest of consumers, farmers and processors.

I. T. exemption for Sri Venkateshwara Jalanidhi Scheme

3304. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Sri Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams, Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh has submitted a proposal for Income-Tax exemption for its Sri Venkateshwara Jalanidhi Scheme;

(b) whether the Ministry of Finance is aware of the national importance of the project which is going to serve the needs of the hundreds of thousands of pilgrims visiting the Holy place; and

(c) if so, the reasons for taking so much time in giving IT concession even after so many letters to the Finance Minister and the Prime Minister by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The proposals were considered by the National Committee for Promotion of Social and Economic Welfare on several occasions and it did not recommend the case for approval under section 35AC of the I.T. Act, 1961. In response to the Chief Minister of Andhra Pardesh's letters, the Finance Minister has conveyed the Committee's decision.

8—160/RS/ND/2000